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EDUCATION AND LABOR COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

14 A meeting of the Education and Labor Committee of the Suffolk
15 County Legislature was held via Zoom in the Rose Y. Caracappa
16 Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature
17 Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on
18 February 24, 2021.
19
20

21 **Members Present:**

22 Legislator Kevin J. McCaffrey - Chairman
23 Legislator Samuel Gonzalez - Vice Chairman
24 Legislator Susan A. Berland
25 Legislator Leslie Kennedy
26 Legislator Kara Hahn
27 Legislator Jason Richberg
28 Legislator William Spencer
29

30 **Also in Attendance:**

31 Presiding Officer Robert Calarco
32 Sarah Simpson - Counsel to the Legislature
33 Amy Ellis - Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
34 Derek Stein - Aide to Presiding Officer Calarco
35 Ben Zwirn - Suffolk County Community College
36 Danielle Lingg - Department of Labor
37 All Other Interested Parties
38

39 **Minutes Taken By:**

40 Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer
41

42 **Minutes Transcribed By:**

43 Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary
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(The meeting was called to order at 11:33 a.m.)

CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:

Welcome, everybody, to the Education and Labor Committee. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Gonzalez.

(Salutation)

CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:

Thank you. And I don't -- Madam Clerk or Mr. Clerk today?

MR. DUBOIS:

Mr. Clerk.

CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:

Do we have any correspondence?

MR. DUBOIS:

We do not.

CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:

Mr. Clerk. I couldn't -- Mr. Clerk, do we have any correspondence?

MR. DUBOIS:

We do not.

CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:

Okay, very good. And as per the Governor's Executive Order in person public comments will not be permitted during this meeting. Those interested in addressing Legislators may do so over Zoom by signing up at suffolkcountynylegislature.us/committeepublicportion. Also, members of the public should also send written testimony by e-mail to clerk.legislature@suffolkcountyny.gov.

With that, Mr. Clerk, we have no appointments. We have no presentations.

P.O. CALARCO:

Legislator McCaffrey, maybe you didn't get the e-mail, but you do have one speaker who signed up today.

CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:

Oh, I'm sorry. I did not see that. I'm sorry.

P.O. CALARCO:

It's Ben Zwirn.

CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:

Oh, Ben Zwirn.

MR. ZWIRN:

Are you ready for me?

P.O. CALARCO:

I'll handle the clock whenever you're ready, Legislator McCaffrey.

1 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**

2 Please.

3
4 **MR. ZWIRN:**

5 You can put me on the clock. It's good to see everybody. I know
6 we've been away since you haven't had in person meetings, but we
7 just wanted to give you a quick update, some of the members of the
8 Board. I know that Chairman McCaffrey and the Presiding Officer,
9 Rob Calarco, have been in touch with members of the Board of
10 Trustees with respect to the Search Committee, and they are privy
11 to information that I don't have so I will not talk about that, but
12 there are some things I'd like to just bring you up to date.

13
14 The College is functioning well under these difficult times. Most
15 of our students are learning remotely. Together in conjunction
16 with the State University, the SUNY System, we are doing Covid
17 testing for staff and students that are on campus on a weekly basis
18 so that they're tested and the numbers have been extremely good and
19 optimistic. We tested over -- about 5,000 people so far with tests
20 and it's been about 15 tested positive out of that, so the
21 positivity rate is excellent. And by doing this testing on a
22 weekly basis we hope that we get a handle on everything that's been
23 going on and hopefully, hopefully, by the fall we can resume more
24 things on campus.

25
26 Sports activities have commenced as of February 15th, with
27 additional sports going on starting on March 1st. So some of that
28 is starting to return to normal and that's really good news.

29
30 All three of our campuses, the Grant Campus in Brentwood, the
31 Ammerman Campus in Selden, and the Eastern Campus in Riverhead are
32 all being used as PODs, points of distribution, for Covid
33 vaccinations. It started and continues to be on an appointment
34 basis for not the general public, but for first responders,
35 volunteer firemen, police officers. And now on the Ammerman Campus
36 we're going to be doing municipal workers. The only hold up that
37 we have had has been the weather and the number of vaccines that
38 have become available.

39
40 Our enrollment has suffered as a result of the pandemic as many of
41 our students have lost jobs and don't have the revenue to be able
42 to afford to go to college right now. Hopefully that will improve.

43
44 The CARES Act money that the College received in the first Rescue
45 Act, the six and a half million dollars that went out to students,
46 there were over 11,000 students that were recipients of that, and
47 an additional four or 500 students received money from the Suffolk
48 County Foundation as well. And the money from the CARES Act was to
49 be used for anything, transportation, rent, books, fees, whatever
50 they needed, the students needed it for, it was granted.

51
52 Sixty of our student nurses are working in the Covid vaccination
53 situation so we're proud of them, and they're also helping us with
54 the Covid testing on campus.

1 Thirteen of our students have recently been awarded the prestigious
2 and highly competitive internships at the Brookhaven National
3 Laboratory, where they'll be collaborating with renowned scientists
4 and engineers in some of the labs on the most advanced research
5 projects. And this was a national program, so our students are
6 among the best, not just here at Suffolk County, but across the
7 country and we're proud of that.

8
9 Four of our students have been recommended for Chancellor Awards,
10 Leeanna Rutigliano from Medford, Imani Ackerman from Center
11 Moriches, Gabriella Hassildine from Mattituck and Amrita Deonanan
12 from from Brentwood. They have all been nominated for awards.

13
14 We have recently been awarded a Veteran friendly designation
15 because of the veteran's programs that we have on campus and that
16 has been something that we're very, very proud of and continue.
17 We have resource centers for our veterans on all three campuses to
18 help them with resources that are available to them from the V.A.
19 and what we can do for them at the College.

20
21 That's just a small, you know, idea of what's going on at the
22 College. We're meeting our obligations. We have held up on -- on
23 some of our asks for the County because we know how difficult a
24 time this is. We're hoping that the CARES Act gets approved by the
25 Congress and that will be helpful as well.

26
27 If you have any questions, I'd be glad to take them. Just a quick
28 update to let you know that we're still here and we're still
29 working hard.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**

32 Thank you, Ben. I appreciate it. I know Legislator Hahn had her
33 hand up.

34
35 **D.P.O. HAHN:**

36 Hi, Ben. Thank you for all you're doing and I'm hoping you're
37 doing well. You know, we have so many frontline workers at the
38 Community College and vaccination plans for them?

39
40 **MR. ZWIRN:**

41 Yes, yes. The County Executive has designated some vaccinations to
42 be available for Suffolk County staff that meet the qualifications.
43 They'll be given on the Ammerman Campus. I know I signed up for
44 them as well and have not heard yet back about an appointment, but
45 this week some of them will be from the College. Lou Petrizzo, who
46 is the Interim President, and the County Executive worked out an
47 arrangement where that could be helpful. And, again, as more of
48 our students and faculty get vaccinations going forward, hopefully
49 we'll be able to return to some sense of normalcy by the fall
50 semester.

51
52 **D.P.O. HAHN:**

53 If sports have begun, have performance arts and other activities
54 returned as well?

1 **MR. ZWIRN:**

2 I'm sorry, the connection isn't very good. I'm having trouble
3 understanding.

4
5 **D.P.O. HAHN:**

6 Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Hopefully you can hear me now. If
7 sports have resumed, has the performing arts and other activities
8 resumed as well?

9
10 **MR. ZWIRN:**

11 Yes, some of them have resumed remotely. And again, those are
12 things that you look to have in person, but there are things that
13 are going on in the performing arts that are -- that are being done
14 on a remote basis. I'll get you some detailed information on that
15 to your office directly.

16
17 **D.P.O. HAHN:**

18 Thank you.

19
20 **MR. ZWIRN:**

21 You're welcome.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**

24 And, Legislator Kennedy, you had a question?

25
26 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

27 Ben, I'm not sure if you know about this or you have any knowledge
28 in it. The health insurance for the adjunct professors has
29 supposedly gone up, is that true, substantially?

30
31 **MR. ZWIRN:**

32 I'll find out. I don't know the answer offhand, but I will find
33 out.

34
35 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

36 And you'll get back to me? Thank you so much.

37
38 **MR. ZWIRN:**

39 And I'll get back to you.

40
41 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

42 Thank you.

43
44 **MR. ZWIRN:**

45 And I just want to tell you that your husband, the County
46 Comptroller, has been very helpful in working with the College
47 during these difficult times, and I know I thanked him publicly
48 many times. And the County Executive, the County Legislature and
49 the County Comptroller have worked very hard to help keep the
50 College rolling along.

51
52 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

53 That's his job, Ben.

54
55 **MR. ZWIRN:**

56 And we appreciate it. He's always available. We have his cell

1 phone number if we need him, we can call him right when you're
2 having dinner.

3
4 **LEG. KENNEDY:**
5 Yup.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**
8 Does anybody else have any questions of Ben? Okay. Very good,
9 Ben. Thank you for coming on and your good work there at the
10 College.

11
12 **MR. ZWIRN:**
13 Thank you very much.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**
16 Great. Thank you.

17
18 Okay, with that, we're going to move onto Introductory Resolution
19 **1033 - Accepting and appropriating 100% federal pass-through grant**
20 **funds from the New York State Department of Labor for the**
21 **Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant. (Co. Exec.)**

22
23 **LEG. SPENCER:**
24 Motion to approve and place on the Consent Calendar.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**
27 Yes, to place on the Consent Calendar. Okay. And we also have
28 Danielle Lingg from the Labor Department if anybody has any
29 questions on that resolution or anything else that they --
30 questions they have for the Labor Department. Nope? Okay, very
31 good. With that, we have a motion and a second. Roll call.

32
33 **MR. DUBOIS:**
34 I'm sorry, who was the second on the motion?

35
36 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**
37 Legislator Kennedy, I'm sorry.

38
39 *(Roll Called by Dan Dubois - Chief Deputy Clerk)*

40
41 **LEG. SPENCER:**
42 Yes.

43
44 **LEG. KENNEDY:**
45 Yes.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**
48 Yes.

49
50 **LEG. GONZALEZ:**
51 Yes.

52
53 **D.P.O. HAHN:**
54 Yes.

1 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

2 Yes.

3

4 **LEG. BERLAND:**

5 Yes.

6

7 **LEG. CALARCO:**

8 Yes.

9

10 **MR. DUBOIS:**

11 Eight.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN MCCAFFREY:**

14 The resolution passes. *(Vote: 8-0-0-0 - Presiding Officer Calarco*
15 *is included in the vote).*

16

17 Anything else to come before our committee? Hearing none, we stand
18 adjourned. Thank you, everybody.

19

20 *(The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.)*

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